

THE TALON



OPERATION JOINT GUARD, BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

SERVING THE SOLDIERS OF TASK FORCE EAGLE

Ramrods roll into Bosnia



Members of 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment (Mech.), roll across the Sava bridge from Croatia into Bosnia and Herzegovina in their Bradley Fighting Vehicles.

Photo by Spc. TB Winston

Spc. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK—A lot of new faces are showing

Inside

LAWS OF WORK	2
SLINGLOAD	3
TV TIME	4
SCOUTS	5
ARTILLERY	6-7
SIGONELLA	9
COMBAT JAG	10

up here as 3rd Brigade and 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division trade out.

The two units which make up the bulk of people here, HHC, 9th Engineer Battalion, and 62nd Engineer battalion are headed back home taking some 500 people with them. But, rolling in on Bradley Fighting Vehicles, the infantry is hitting Bedrock.

The new command element at Camp Bedrock is 2nd battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division, otherwise known as the Ramrods.

"We are prepared to stay until the mission is complete, even if that takes six years," said Maj. Ulises J. Soto, the battalion executive officer.

The battalion will provide security, checkpoints, check weapon storage sites, coordination with locals and anything else that needs to happen in Task Force 2-2.

The name ramrods comes from the Mexican American War.

"At the siege of Chapultepec, a sergeant major in the unit stormed the citadel. He took a cannon ramrod and used it as a club," said Soto.

The 2-2 is commanded by Lt. Col. Jim Mason.

With a new command element here, life may be a little different, but from Bedrock you will still hear a yabba-dabba do.

Laws of work

If you can't get your work done in the first 24 hours, work nights.

A pat on the back is only a few centimeters from a kick in the butt.

Don't be irreplaceable. If you can't be replaced, you can't be promoted.

It doesn't matter what you do, it only matters what you say you've done and what you're going to do.

After any pay increase, you will have less money at the end of the month than you did before.

The more crap you put up with, the more crap you are going to get.

You can go anywhere you want if you look serious and carry a clipboard.

When supervisors talk about improving productivity, they are never talking about themselves.

If at first you don't succeed, try again. Then quit. No use being a damn fool about it.

Keep your boss's boss off your boss's back.

Everything can be filed under "miscellaneous."

When confronted by a difficult problem you can solve it more easily by reducing it to the question, "How would the Lone Ranger handle this?"

To err is human, to forgive is not our policy.

Anyone can do any amount of work provided it isn't the work he/she is supposed to be doing.

Important letters that contain no errors will develop errors when emailed.

When you don't know what to do, walk fast and look worried.

Following the rules will not get the job done.

Getting the job done is no excuse for not following the rules.

LAYING DOWN THE LAWS

As I travel from base camp to base camp, there is a feeling in the air called redeployment. The atmosphere is filled with sounds of going home.

To some of us, we may soon start to realize we are leaving Bosnia. Some will deploy to home station, many to bases in Germany, and others will return to the United States, whether to a new duty station or home as a civilian.

There are many smiles and much anticipation about rejoining family members and renewing friendships.

We are all making plans and arrangements for our safe return. Back home, family and friends are also planning for our return.

As redeployment dates draw near, we need to be reminded to stay focused on our mission. We need to continue to maintain our profession-



al attitude. Be more deliberate in your actions, follow safety precautions and do not take any unnecessary short-cuts. Follow the regulations and manuals and listen to the officers and noncommissioned officers as they share their expertise.

I believe that one of the keys to the success of this task force is that the soldiers are well trained and focused on the mission. The leaders know what must be done. We are all working together in this peacekeeping mission, not only U.S. military, but multinational forces as well.

There is much talk about being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Don't become complacent now. We must be vigilant in our actions and efforts.

Command Sgt. Maj. James W. Laws
1st Infantry Division (Forward)

Floodwaters

A man was stranded on his roof in rising flood waters. A neighbor came by in his boat and said, "Get in. I'll take you to safety."

"No," replied the strande. "God will save and protect me." And so his neighbor motored away.

The waters rose higher and the man climbed to the peak of his roof. A National Guard rescue boat came by and the guardsmen urged the man to get on board as the flood had not yet crested. Still, the man refused help, again proclaiming his certainty that God alone would save him from the swirling waters.

Finally, as the man sat atop his chimney, the raging water lapping at his feet, a helicopter hovered overhead and the pilot begged the man to please grab the lifeline and let her pull him in.

"The Lord will protect me and save me from the flood," the man cried, and at that moment the water surged over him and he was swept away and drowned.

The man soon found himself in heaven, face-to-face with God. Hurt and angry, he demanded, "I believed in you! I had faith that you would save me! Why did you let me drown?"

The Almighty replied, "What do you mean, 'let you drown?' I sent two boats and a helicopter!"

When the floodwaters of life surround you and you think you are about to drown, cry out to God — and remember: God's help often comes in strange and unexpected ways, but it always comes.

By the Chaplains Office

THE TALON

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Slinging it internationally

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

GUARDIAN BASE — No helicopters were available because of the weather, but inquisitive teams of European soldiers still learned how to prepare cargo for transport by Chinook helicopters during unique training recently hosted by the 299th Forward Support Battalion.

The training was conducted by members of the 299th, who have worked with sling-load operations at Guardian since arriving in Bosnia last year. For many of the NATO soldiers, sling-load operations were as foreign as the American instructors.

"We have not used this type of training before," said Capt. B.G. Jonsson, a supply officer in the Swedish Battalion. "If something happened on the main roads and we had to use helicopters, we would need to use this type of training."

Sling-load operations involve preparing cargo for transport by large Chinook helicopters. Cargo, either wrapped in heavy-duty nets or in large metal containers, must be prepared meticulously to prevent disaster. Loads not prepared correctly could endanger the helicopter, the cargo or both.

The loads, which can weigh up to 25,000 pounds, can include anything the 299th usually delivers by truck and trailer, such as rations, ammunition or vehicle parts and equipment. Using Chinook helicopters to deliver supplies is a last-resort measure in case of emergencies.

"Sling-load is a fast and efficient way to get parts and other stuff to locations where you can't transport it with vehicles," said Staff Sgt. Ildefonso E. Barraza, NCOIC of the receiving and storage section in the 299th's Class 9 warehouse. "It is very simple, you just have to be very careful, because there's a lot of safety issues involved."

Getting the NATO troops trained on sling-load operations is crucial, because

breaks in the regular supply lines could also affect European battalions. Chinooks would be used to supply the European base camps and it would be helpful to have personnel trained to react properly.

"This training is very important, especially in Bosnia," said Barraza. "We work closely with the soldiers from other countries and they need to know this stuff."

The training focused on preparing cargo loads for delivering using nets and large metal containers. The European soldiers, from Finland, Denmark, Poland and Sweden, learned the proper ways to attach ropes and chains to loads and how to prepare them for hook-up to hovering helicopters. Had the helicopters been available, the Europeans would have attached the sling-loads to the Chinook and watched as the helicopter carried them away. "Despite the absence of helicopters, the training was beneficial," said Jonsson.

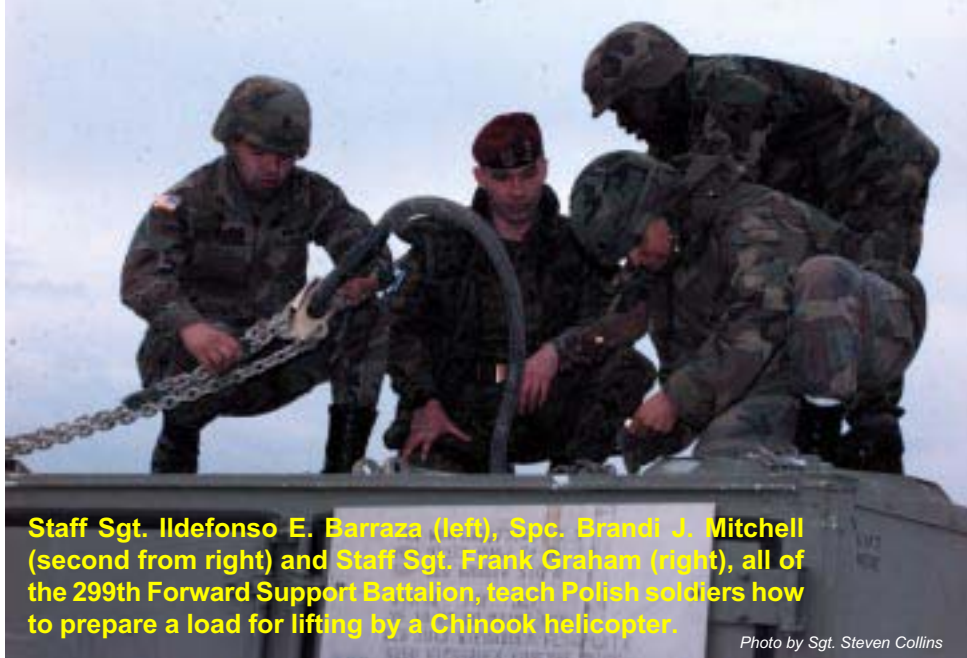
The training was also unique for the Americans, since this was the first time the 299th has hosted European soldiers for sling-load training.

"This is the first time for us, but the training is going pretty good," said Barraza. "We've had to slow down the pace because of the language differences, but (the Europeans) are interested and are learning pretty quickly."

"All the training we've done before has been with U.S. troops," said Shinholster. "This the first time these soldiers have done some type of sling-load training, but they're getting the feel for it."

The European soldiers excitedly took to the training and did not hesitate to get involved, said Staff Sgt. Frank Graham, a yardsman in the 299th FSB warehouse.

"Everyone is just doing their job and learning what they can," he said. "There may be a language problem but we haven't had many problems."



Staff Sgt. Ildefonso E. Barraza (left), Spc. Brandi J. Mitchell (second from right) and Staff Sgt. Frank Graham (right), all of the 299th Forward Support Battalion, teach Polish soldiers how to prepare a load for lifting by a Chinook helicopter.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

NEWS BRIEFS

Daylight-saving time

Don't forget the daylight-saving time change March 30 -- spring forward one hour.

Religious Programs

During this time of year there are many religious holidays which are coming up -- from Easter to Pass-over to the Islamic Festival of Sacrifice. To join others in celebrating these and other religious holidays, contact your base chaplain.

Everywhere a Sign

As redeployment nears, take time to refresh your memory on European road signs. This winter privately owned vehicle accidents during off-duty hours are on the rise. Most of these accidents are related to alcohol, speed, weather, fatigue and poor judgement by junior soldiers. Take the time to slowly adjust to civilian driving -- POVs don't handle like HMMWVs.

Circle



Closed

Closed to cars



Closed to bicycles

Closed to trailers



Danger

SFOR / Tuzla -- making media

By Sgt. Steven Collins
129th MPAD

TUZLA, Bosnia – Mato Dakovic, director of Tuzla Television, knows his audience and he knows his audience is excited to learn more about the U.S. Army and its stabilization force mission.

"We want to show that (Americans) are real human beings like us," said Dakovic through an interpreter. "It's hard to learn about the Americans, because they are locked up in the base camps. But we want to learn more about their regular lives."

Dakovic and representatives of the psychological operations support element of the 1st Infantry Division recently met to discuss how the Army and local broadcast media can produce shows to inform local citizens about SFOR and show how important Americans are to the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"We were laying the groundwork for (Task Force Eagle) personnel to be on air or to appear on a local TV show," said Capt. John R. Mills, 11th Psychological Operations Battalion. "(The local media) are interested in having key communicators in the Task Force Eagle chain-of-command participate in question-and-answer shows on radio and TV."

Mills, the PSYOPS radio and television operations officer at Tuzla Main Base, also discussed possible programming for this spring with the station manager of Radio Tuzla.

"People want to know and have shown a lot of interest in the roles, mission and objectives of Task Force Eagle," said Mills. "This project will have great effectiveness and success and will reflect the interests of the host country and its population."

Mills and other PSYOPS team members at Tuzla Main have been working with Bosnian media representatives since arriving a few months ago. The PSYOPS team produces radio and television information spots about the Army and its mission in Bosnia and releases those to local media outlets. The team also produces print products, such as newspapers and pamphlets, and distributes them throughout multinational division-North.

"The bottom line is that PSYOPS communicates the commander's information campaign to the local population," said Mills. "We've had positive reactions from the target populations to a lot of this information."



Capt. John R. Mills, 11th Psychological Operations Battalion, discusses a proposal for a radio talk show about SFOR with Hajrudin Seleskovic, news editor for Radio Tuzla.

Photo by Sgt. Steven Collins

The success of the radio and television programming, including recent radio call-in shows involving commanders from Task Force 1-18 and 1-26, is the foundation of the idea involving Task Force Eagle commanders. The shows will allow audience members to call-in with questions about SFOR and the Army and give commanders the opportunity to respond directly over the air.

"It's hard to learn about the Americans, because they are locked up in the base camps. We want to learn more about their regular lives."

— Mato Dakovic, TV Director

"People are interested in everything about SFOR and this show would be very popular," said Nedium Hrustambegovic, station manager of Radio Tuzla. "We might pick one topic per show, like de-mining, and have audience members call-in for more information."

Radio spots have been very popular with local citizens in areas across Bosnia and Croatia, said Mills.

"Our teams conduct regular surveys which gauge the target area population to measure their responsiveness to our messages," he said. "We can see a great impact and interest on behalf of the local population and it gives them satisfaction that we are achieving mission accomplishment."

The effectiveness of the PSYOPS message was evident recently during the announcement of the Brcko Arbitration decision. Mills said the potential for violence following the decision was very real and that PSYOPS had to use broadcast and print media products to help disarm hostility.

"We really didn't want to see a flare up of violence because of Brcko," said Mills. "So we produced a variety of radio and TV products to prepare (the local population) for the decision and to help shape and form their reaction to the actual announcement. We feel we were successful."

PSYOPS teams will continue to work with Bosnian media representatives to spread the Army's message. Dakovic said he is interested in helping the Americans succeed because his audience is fascinated by the Army and its soldiers.

"I feel we could go together and make joint projects," said Dakovic. "American and Bosnian teams would work together at the base camps. The result would be popular."

Choosing sides

By Spc. Susanne Aspley
364th MPAD

Early one morning, a joint patrol consisting of Scouts from Task Force 1-26 and Russian soldiers were walking together through downtown Zvornik. The group's translator overheard an encouraging comment from an elderly Serbian man. According to Sgt. John H. Silber, section sergeant in the Scout Platoon, the man said, "Imagine it, whoever would have expected to see Russians and Americans together like this!"

The Americans and Russians have been conducting patrols together since late November.

"Working together, we can show the former warring factions that we have an alliance and are serious about the enforcement of the Dayton Peace Accord," Silber said. "We are all on the same side. When we go into towns together, people see we are committed to working together."

Working together does, however, involve learning about each other. Silber pointed out that the Russians' military system is very officer oriented. Several times, the fact that American noncommissioned officers carry a great deal of responsibility and leadership ability had to be clarified. It is normal for officers and NCOs to coordinate a mission together. "The Russian officers are not used to this and it had to be explained that it was not an insult to deal directly with American NCOs rather than our officers," said Silber.

The Scouts and Russians regularly meet at the designated checkpoint in Karakaj. "We both have an idea of what we want or need to do," said Silber. "We agree on a route and where we need to stop. Our patrols depend on significant happenings in the sector." The Russian soldiers are an element of 2nd Company, 1st Airborne Battalion, Russian Brigade based in Priboj, east of Tuzla.

Russians also gain credibility having the United States supporting them. The commitment is fully reciprocated. For example, the Russian troops pulled patrols in the village of Mahala, which is in the US sector. 1st Lt. Nathan J. Wasser, Scout platoon leader, TF 1-26, said the Russians and Americans are equals as pro-



1st Lt. William Honea, Russian liaison officer, a Russian officer, Sgt. Chris Curry and Staff Sgt. Ron Hambrick both of Scout Platoon, discuss their route before heading out on joint patrol in the village of Karakaj.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

fessional soldiers. "We speak the universal language of mission accomplishment," he said. "We have shown the civilian population that we can work together regardless of our past history."

"For the most part, the Russian soldiers are as interested in us as we are in them. We do a lot of trading. They like our Gerbers and Leatherman tools and we like their fur caps and belts," said Silber. "Depending on time, if our patrols end early, the Russians come back with us to Camp Dobol. They eat with us at the chow hall and shop at the PX. We show the soldiers where and how we live."

1st Lt. William W. Honea, Russian liaison officer, coordinates tactical operations between Russian and U.S. forces. He accompanies the TF 1-26 on their joint patrols, functioning as a translator and advisor.

"This is the only real-world mission in which the U.S. and Russian soldiers are working together as allies," said Honea. "When you think about how far relations have come in the last 10 years between our two countries, it impresses upon you the importance of what we are accomplishing, and the personal relationships that we are forming."

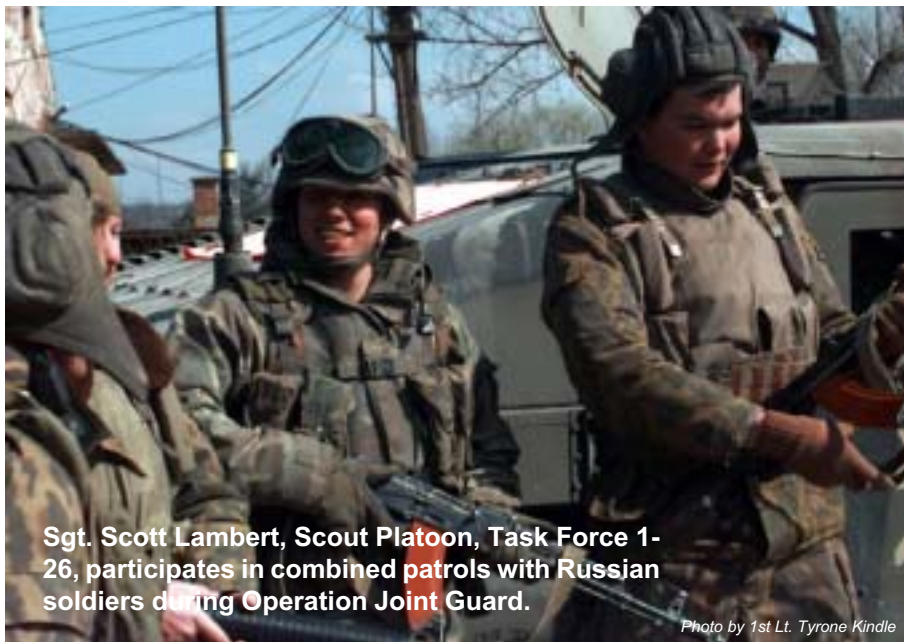
There are some very big differences between the two armies, said Honea. "Their units are self-sufficient, and often come up with their own provisions. They are very resourceful because they don't have a lot of the niceties." For instance, they don't receive boxes of ready-to-eat food. They receive staples such as potatoes, flour, and meat, and cook at company level.

An example of the bond of trust built between the Russians and the Scouts is made apparent by the good-natured interaction of the soldiers. "The other day, I happened to see some questionnaires that were filled out by Russian soldiers," said Honea. "One of the questions was 'Do you think your SFOR allies would come to your aid if the shooting started; and if yes, which country?' The answer on every questionnaire that I saw was 'Yes; the Americans.'"

Undoubtedly, working with the Russian troops is a very unique opportunity. "I was in the army during the Cold War, so to see former adversaries side-by-side should be an encouragement for the former warring factions to get along," said Silber.

In preparation for the approaching redeployment of TF 1-26, the Scouts will orientate the new task force to the different aspects of the sector. They will be introduced to the Russians and the villagers regularly met along the way.

"I have some of the best and most hard working soldiers in the task force. We are the only Scouts in Task Force 1-26 and we are proud of that. Our commander knows if he has something that needs to be done, he can call us," Silber said.



Sgt. Scott Lambert, Scout Platoon, Task Force 1-26, participates in combined patrols with Russian soldiers during Operation Joint Guard.

Photo by 1st Lt. Tyrone Kindle

Com g



Background, Russian 2S9 self-propelled howitzers roared during a demonstration for U.S. artillery from Company A, 1st FA, who visited the Russian camp at Priboj on Mar. 15... Jeffery S. Campbell, Co. A, 1-7 FA, gets some pointers on the howitzer from one of its Russian crewmembers, Sgt. Kevin F. Gregory, commander, Co. A, 1-7 FA, during a visit to the Russian camp at Proboj... Spc. A, 1-7 FA, and Sgt. Sergie Lohonya, of the Russian 1st FA, race to reassemble their weapons.

Story and photos by Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

mon ground



The two men sat poised and tense, their disassembled weapons lying on the ground before them. Spc. Abelardo W. Braham looked at the Russian soldier across from him, then at his rifle. In a few seconds it would be all over. He was nervous. "Oh, please, don't let me screw up," he thought.

The signal came. Both soldiers dived for their weapons. As quickly as possible Braham and the Russian soldier scrambled to put together their rifles.

As expected, the competition lasted only seconds, and after assembling his weapon, the Russian soldier jumped up in victory. Braham stood and shook the hand of his competitor while the soldiers around them cheered and clapped.

Braham, a 22-year-old soldier with Company A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery, wasn't going to let his defeat dampen the fun he was having during his unit's visit to the Russian 1st Airborne Artillery Battalion at Priboj on Mar. 15.

"I enjoyed it, I really did," said Braham, a native of Modesto, Calif. "I really liked the way they accepted us."

The Co. A, 1-7 FA visit to Priboj was a return favor by the Russian artillery for their visit on Mar. 10 with their American counterparts from McGovern Base. The two meetings between the U.S. and Russian artillery units were unusual for Braham, who said he was initially a little hesitant talking with his former Cold War enemies. However, his Russian hosts, he said, made him feel at home.

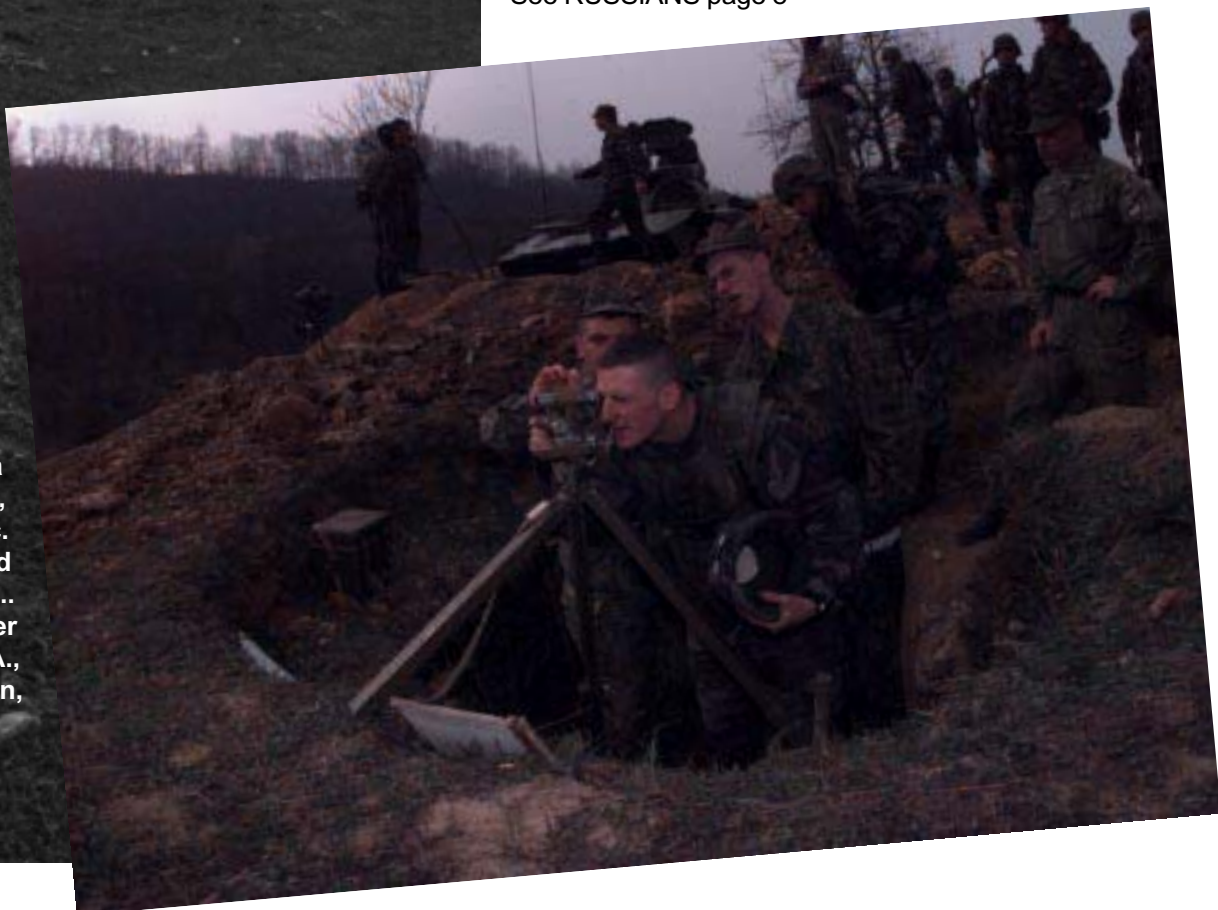
"I felt so relaxed with them, so at ease," said Braham. "I especially enjoyed the interaction. I was very impressed."

Braham wasn't alone. The Priboj visit was the first chance for many of the American artillerymen to see first hand the differences between them and the Russians. The biggest difference between the two units was equipment. Co. A, 1-7 FA is equipped with the M109 self-propelled howitzer. Everything about this vehicle is big. From its towering box-like body, to its long-barreled 155mm gun with gaping flash suppresser, to its 27-ton weight. Nine crewmembers are needed to operate it.

In contrast, the Russian airborne artillery has the much smaller 2S9 self-propelled howitzer, which looks more like a diminutive submarine than an armored howitzer. Its nautical appearance is no coincidence — the 2S9 is amphibious. It can

See RUSSIANS page 8

into firing position during a
Battalion, 7th Field Artillery,
from top left, clockwise, Pfc.
ers on the 2S9 self-propelled
Junior Sgt. Dmitriy Razgulin...
peers through a range finder
Abelardo W. Braham of Co. A.,
1st Airborne Artillery Battalion,



9th Eng. Bn. assists mine clearing

By Spc. Janel R. George
129th MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK— There are 250,000 known mines in Bosnia-Herzegovina according to the Mine Action Center. Working together, Stabilization Force soldiers and Bosnian leaders are attempting to put a dent in these numbers.

Company B, 9th Engineer Battalion and 503rd Svorick Brigade are performing counter mine operations in the zone of separation near Camp Demi.

Under the Dayton Peace Accord, the former warring factions are required to cleanup their minefields. "The factions have not held up their end of the deal with the Dayton Peace Accord," said 1st Lt. Victor Ames, Mine Action Center officer in charge.

"We do not put any of our soldiers in the mine field, we simply observe them (factions) clearing it," said Lt. Col. Jeffery Dorko, 9th Engineer Brigade, as US soldiers work hand in hand with members of the 503rd Svornik Brigade, from the Republic of Serbska.

"We watch from a distance. We always stay at least 50 meters outside the mine field," said 1st Lt. Matt Merrill, 9th Engineer Battalion.

Mining operations are hampered by poor weather. "When there is snow on the ground we can't see the mines or any signs of them," said Ames.

"We are doing minefield verifications. We go to the various sites with the factions and they take us through the areas," said Merrill, mine verification office in charge.

Verifying minefield records that exist can be difficult at times. "Not all of the mines are still there, often they (the factions) pulled up the mines when they pulled out," said Merrill.

When the members of the 9th Engr. Bn. arrive on site, many preparations are made.

"First thing we do is set up a land-

ing pad for possible medical evacuation. Then we break out the necessary equipment," said Merrill. "Then we must go over the map field records to get everyone on the same sheet of music."

Mines are not always in the same shape they were when they were first placed. "Sometimes the mines are damaged. Those mines are blown in place," said Merrill. "If they are intact, they are disarmed and brought to a collection spot and blown there."

"In any case we watch from a distance," said Merrill. "We provide the factions with the time systems and they do everything else."

"We use the Americans time systems and hook them up to our demolitions to assure that the mines are properly demolished," said Lt. Boro Kresanovic, engineer commander.

"We have different techniques, so we are learning from each other," said Kresanovic. "They are getting to know ours and we are getting to know theirs."

"These people are making Bosnia a safer place for the entire world," said Ames. "We have different armies working together to make the world a safer place."



There are 250,000 known mines in Bosnia-Herzegovina according to the Mine Action Center.

Photo by 55th Signal Company, Combat Camera

RUSSIANS

from page 7

also be dropped out of aircraft, with its four-man crew inside if necessary. The SP howitzer also can raise and lower its eight-ton frame as need be, not unlike a California lowrider. And lastly, the short, narrow 122mm howitzer can double as a mortar.

"Their artillery vehicles are so much different than what we have," said Braham. "It's very flexible. It's able to swim, and able to fire a mortar round, as well as a regular artillery round. And it was very impressive how it could lower and raise."

While the vehicles may be different, the men who operate them are very similar, said Capt. Kevin F. Gregory, 28, commander of Co. A, 1-7 FA.

"The one thing I noticed is that our soldiers are pretty much the same," said the Ireland, W.Va., native. "They both have the same goals. Some of the Russians are conscripts, but most of them are profession-

als, especially the officers."

Gregory said it was easy for both sides to relate to each other, partially because of their common duties as artillerymen.

"It's easier to bond, so on a soldier level we have a great relationship," said Gregory. "And it's the same on the officer level. I've talked with both of their battery commanders and we got along great with them."

Col. Valeri Burtsov, chief of artillery, Russian Brigade, said he enjoyed these visits and the exchange of information between the two units.

"These visits help strengthen the friendship that we not so long ago established," said Burtsov. "It was not so long ago that contacts at our lower level did not exist. Only at the top did our highest leaders have contact with each other. But now it's wonderful that we can meet at our level and develop this type of cooperation."

Campbell reciprocated the Russian hospitality by showing off some of his personal equipment. "I loaned my LBE and kev-

lar helmet to some of the Russian soldiers and they were running around getting pictures taken," he said. "They were very interested in trying our stuff and we were interested in trying theirs."

The exchange in equipment knowledge included the soldiers' individual rifles.

"One of the Russian soldiers showed us one of their weapons and he broke it down," said Braham. "They wanted to see our weapon, and one of our platoon leaders requested I break down my M-16. As soon as I did the Russian soldier wanted to have a competition in reassembling them."

Braham lost the resulting race, but was game for a second try — this time blindfolded. The crowd of American and Russian soldiers cheered as the two men fumbled blindly for the parts of their weapons. This time Braham took the honors.

"I fumbled the first time, but I came through the second time blindfolded," he said. "I won hands down."

As before, the two competitors — American and Russian — shook hands.

Sigonella ships supplies

By Staff Sgt. Jerry A. Weber
129TH MPAD

CAMP BEDROCK — The joy of giving to the needy is something that gives people a feeling of worth. For an entire community, the spirit becomes teamwork as families join to share this feeling.

The community of the Naval Air Station Sigonella, Sicily, heard the call when Navy Lt. Timothy P. Richardt of Exploded Ordnance Division, Mobile Unit 8, organized a drive that provided one of the largest donated shipments for Bosnian war refugees.

The Navy EOD team, based in Sicily, and the members supporting Operation Joint Guard, initiated and sponsored the supply drive for settlements around the Visca and Zivinice area.

Working closely with the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, Richardt saw the living conditions of these Bosnians and the limited resources of the Civil Affairs team.

"I had a chance to talk with the Civil Affairs members about their jobs and how they assist the Bosnians," said Richardt. "I also had the opportunity to witness the living conditions of the refugees and noticed that they needed several things."

Richardt took the first step to see if the Navy could assist the displaced Bosnians. He contacted the EOD unit in Sicily and coordinated with Navy Lt. Bill J. Walawander, who is replacing Richardt as EOD liaison officer.

"We contacted the chaplain's office to see if they could assist us," said Walawander. "They put out the information and the response was great. It seems like every family on Sigonella has donated and it keeps coming in."

The EOD unit also used raffles and a Super Bowl pool to raise money to purchase shoes and school supplies, said Walawander. The Base Exchange offered supplies at discount.

"We heard from the Civil Affairs members that the Bosnians needed shoes and we were able to purchase over \$2,000 worth of shoes from the Base Exchange," said Walawander.

"The displaced Bosnians really don't have any money and can't afford to buy shoes, so they run around in anything they



Navy Lt. Bill J. Walawander, Explosive Ordnance Division liaison officer, hands a bag of clothes to a boy.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Jerry A. Weber

can find," said Capt. Keith B. Nunemaker, a member of the 404th CA Bn.

The cost of shipping is a problem for many organizations. The EOD unit used military transports to ship the supplies as members were rotating in and out of theater. The supplies were shipped on the

"To see the need of these people is heartbreaking... they're treasuring items that back home we just discard"

— *Navy Lt. Bill J. Walawander*

same pallets as their gear, said Richardt.

With the assistance of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 9th Engineer Battalion, the boxes were loaded and transported here for distribution.

One settlement located in Visca, built

in 1994 by the Norwegian Peoples Aid, houses approximately 750 refugees. The people located at this settlement are in need of food, clothing and medical supplies. Many of the women are alone with their children after losing their husbands during the war and have no family members to assist them, said Nunemaker.

The secretary of the settlement, Sadija Jusic, said that she was surprised by the donations.

"The clothes are badly needed and will help out very much," she said treating the military representatives, including Walawander, with some Bosnian coffee to show her appreciation.

"All the credit goes to the Navy personnel and their family members who sponsored the drive," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Dorko, commander of the 9th Engineer Battalion. "We would love to take the credit for this but if any one needs the recognition, it's the Navy for all their hard work they put into sponsoring and delivering these donations."

"I don't know what to say to this kindness, all of it is very helpful," said Jusic.

"It almost convinced me to leave the Army and join the Navy," said Dorko kiddingly.

"To see the need of these people is heartbreaking," said Walawander. "I'm lost for words for what we're doing for them." They're treasuring items that back home, we just discard."

"In the United States there are several towns and organizations that want to help and donate supplies but don't have any way of transporting the items," said Walawander. "The cost of shipping just isn't feasible for getting these donations where they're needed."

One person's idea to help the needy opened a door for an entire community to join forces.

"I'm excited and very impressed with the support of the donations," said Richardt. "I wasn't expecting the support to be this large but having everyone in Sigonella help us out was great."

"He (Richardt) asked how he could help and then he just ran with the idea," said Nunemaker. "Even though the need is great here, everything helps to make life a little easier for the Bosnians suffering the effects of the war."

Combat JAG

By Spc. David Boe
364th MPAD

On the TV show, "JAG," the two main characters portray glamorous judge advocate general officers who, when they're not filling out affidavits, are flying supersonic aircraft, sneaking around shadowy places with drawn pistols or assault rifles and generally battling the bad guys.

According to one reliable source, the show is not realistic.

"The show is totally farfetched," said Capt. Bradley O. Wood, 26, JAG officer for Task Force 1-18 at McGovern Base. "I watched it one time and was so disgusted I didn't watch it again."

Wood, a native of Albermarle, N.C., said that during his career as a JAG officer he's never performed any of the stunts that are pulled on a weekly basis in the TV show.

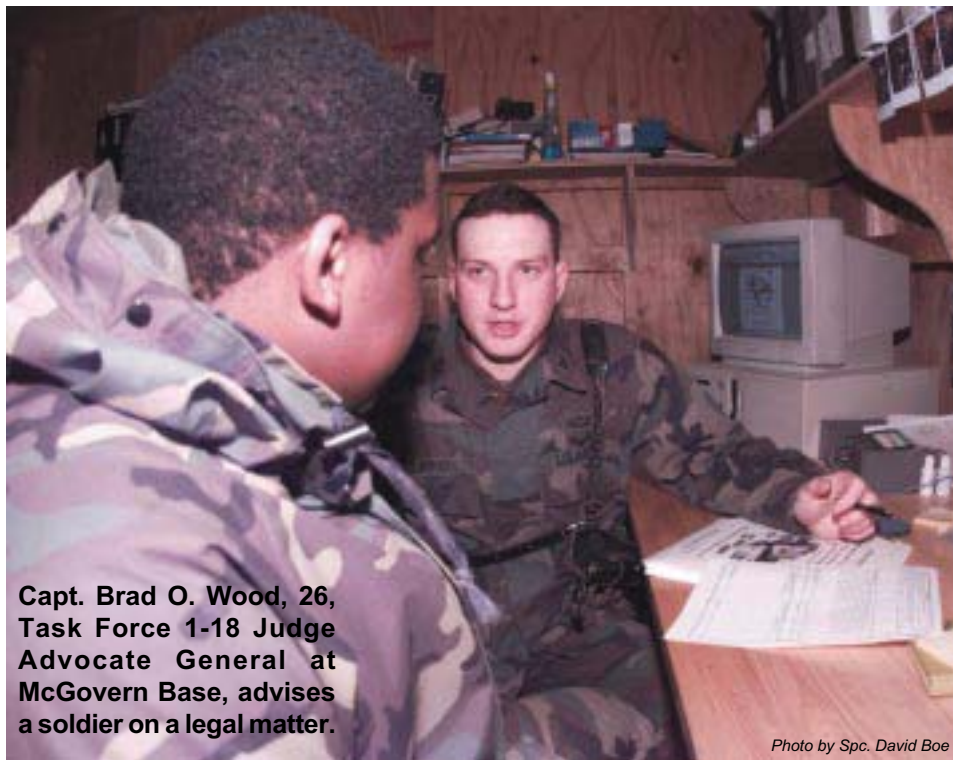
"I don't know how to fly a jet, I've never been on a submarine and I've never been able to order a single air strike as part of a plea bargain as the show does," said Wood. "Apparently this guy on the show is the only JAG in the entire Navy. Everywhere he goes, he's the only one there."

In perhaps the only comparison to the show, Wood is the only JAG officer at McGovern Base, though he does have assistance in his legal endeavors from Sgt. Marshall J. Stiltner, a legal specialist detached from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery. Together, the two perform a necessary, if not overly glamorous, mission for the soldiers of Task Force 1-18.

"It's my job to be the resident expert on the Dayton Peace Accord," said Wood. "However, to be honest with you, after we've been here a while ... the commanders and soldiers know what the rules are."

Another duty, said Wood, is to evaluate damage claims filed by Bosnians. "In the course of driving Bradleys and tanks, no matter how careful we are, we invariably break something," he said. "It could be anything from a broken window pane to major damage to land and property."

Wood said that since arriving in Bosnia-Herzegovina about five months ago, he has processed about 55 such claims. The idea, he said, is to be fair and show the Bosnians that the U.S. Army will pay for damages, but at the same time safeguard the U.S. taxpayers' money, and not spend more than they are supposed to.



Capt. Brad O. Wood, 26, Task Force 1-18 Judge Advocate General at McGovern Base, advises a soldier on a legal matter.

Photo by Spc. David Boe

Other monetary restrictions fall under what Wood called fiscal law. "There's always an urge to help wherever we can," said Wood. "And we just need to make sure that we're doing right by our country's fiscal laws."

An example, said Wood, is in providing medical aid. While some countries, such as Turkey, are more liberal in providing medical care to Bosnians, the U.S. is much more restricted. Wood said that his job is to ensure that the task force adheres to regulations.

Ironically, the most visible and common

attorney or something more complicated like consumer debt problems."

Wood said that he and Stiltner have helped about 500 soldiers with legal matters, including about 150 tax returns. "It's important," he said. "You're not going to see that on a daily basis, but that's 500 soldiers we've helped get some sort of problem out of their way so they can concentrate on what they're doing."

It's the variety of duties on his job and the chance to help fellow soldiers that appeals to Stiltner, 23, who transferred from the infantry two years ago to become a legal specialist.

"It's a great job," said Stiltner, a native of Tazewell, Va. "You can never get burned out, there's so much stuff that's going on. You've got legal assistance, where you help people solve their problems, and then you have military justice."

Wood and Stiltner said they spend most of their time in their little corner "office" inside the task force headquarters, but try to get out when they can.

"We like to get out, and if they need a driver or a TC, we're the first to volunteer," said Wood. "We've been on some ground medevac operations at night and some logpacs in the daytime to various places. We like to get out and see the country as much as everybody else."

"When we first got here, everybody just called us 'JAG,'" said Stiltner. "But as missions kept coming up and we were always there volunteering to help out we acquired the name, 'Combat JAG.'"

Just like the TV show, "JAG?"

"We don't do anything like that — it's not even close," said Stiltner. "Noncommissioned Officers are the backbone of the Army and the show doesn't have any NCOs, so it can't be real."

"I don't know how to fly a jet, I've never been on a submarine and I've never been able to order a single air strike as part of a plea bargain..."

— Capt. Bradley O. Wood

duty of the JAG in garrison — military justice — has been a minor problem in Bosnia, said Wood.

"Here in Bosnia, particularly with this task force, we've had very few incidents," said Wood, who mainly attributed this to the discipline of the soldiers and the chain of command. "Of course, adding to that is the fact that one can't go anywhere and alcohol isn't a problem."

Wood said the biggest duty he performs is legal assistance. "That's helping soldiers with their personal and private legal problems," he said. "That could be anything from a simple notary, to doing a power of

The taxman cometh

American Forces Press Information

WASHINGTON — Before you sit down to do your federal income taxes, the Internal Revenue Service said you should check out several changes to the tax laws that may affect the bottom line of your return. IRS officials said a few changes are:

- o Personal exemption increased to \$2,550;
- o Standard deduction increased to \$4,000 for a taxpayer filing as a single, \$5,900 for head of household and \$6,700 for married filing jointly or qualifying widow(er);
- o Increased filing threshold to determine if you need to file a federal return;
- o Maximum wage and self-employment income subject to Social Security tax is now \$62,700.
- o Standard mileage rate for using your automobile for business is 31 cents a mile, up a penny from last year.
- o Earned income tax credit underwent a number of changes, including an increase for working people who qualify and a change in allowable investment income; the credit will now be denied to those not authorized to work in the United States.
- o A valid taxpayer identification number, or Social Security number, is required for each dependent or dependent care credit claimed. For a complete list of the changes and how they may affect your federal taxes, read IRS Publication 553, Highlights of

1996 Tax Changes.

For military members, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia were designated as a qualified hazardous duty area. This entitles those stationed there, as well as certain individuals providing direct support, to combat pay tax benefits.



In addition, said IRS officials, the area including the Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden, a portion of the Arabian Sea, as well as the countries of Bahrain, Iraq, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates remains a designated combat zone. Military members stationed there, as well as some providing direct support, are entitled to combat pay tax benefits.

IRS Publication 945, Tax Information for Those Affected by Operation Desert

Storm, explains the combat pay exclusion, filing extensions and other tax areas affected by combat zone duty. IRS officials said the tax rules are basically the same for those stationed in the declared hazardous duty area in the Balkans.

For a free copy of these IRS publications, call toll-free (800) 829-3676 or write to:

IRS

Forms Distribution Center
PO Box 85627
Richmond, VA 23285.

Some IRS publications and forms are now available on-line, said tax officials. Access is available through the Internet via the World Wide Web (<http://www.irs.ustreas.gov>) or Telnet ([iris.irs.ustreas.gov](telnet://iris.irs.ustreas.gov)). For access by modem, dial (703) 321-8020.

As part of a test program, some IRS forms and instruction sheets are available by facsimile machine. Dial (703) 487-4160, and using the voice unit of your fax machine, follow the voice prompts.

If you have questions concerning these changes, check with your local installation tax assistance office or local IRS office, or call the IRS toll-free at (800) 829-1040.

IRS also has offices in Rome and Bonn, Germany, to assist overseas taxpayers with federal income tax questions. Contact the Rome office by calling 39 6 4674-2560 or via fax at 39 6 4674-2223. The IRS-Bonn branch is at 49 228 339-2119 or via fax at 49 228 339-2810.

300th MPAD InfoGraph

aFm
ROCKS

0500-0900
101.1 fM

Spc Eric Hendrix
0500-0900/Mon-Fri
Classic Rock

Reed This

Sgt. Corwin Reed



Do I look like I'm stressed out to you?

82nd RTOC -- ready for call

Spec. Gary Bailey
129th MPAD

CAMP SAVA NORTH -- A challenge has been issued, a question put forth. Can guard and reserve soldiers fill in for regular Army units? The 82nd Rear Tactical Operations Center, Oregon National Guard answered with a resounding YES!

The 82nd RTOC was mobilized to serve as part of the peacekeeping mission in the former Yugoslavia. The unit forms the command and control element of Task Force Pershing at Camp Sava North.

The unit replaced the 130th Engineer Brigade and runs the entire camp. This is a little more involved than the mission the unit would normally handle during a deployment.

In a normal situation for the 82nd, Col. Dennis C. Merrill, 82nd RTOC commander, would be the corps rear G-3 (plans and operations, which plans all activities and monitors operations.) However, in Croatia, 82nd RTOC stepped into a job -- command of TF Pershing -- that is more complicated and the unit needed to be restructured to accomplish the mission.

Though some tasks have been added, the command element of the job is the same.

"We're still serving a command and control function, moving soldiers and units through our area of operation, either forward 'into the box' or re-deploying them to the rear to return to their home station," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mike Kalberg of the 82nd.

"We greet them (deploying and redeploying units,) provide them with post information, get them heaters, batteries, and fire extinguishers, manage dining facility hours, refuel them, provide showers and try to accommodate them for the time they are here," said Lt. Col. Earl Woods, 82nd RTOC, mayor of Camp Sava North. "We like to think that we're user friendly, and that we make their experience here as good as it can be."

The mass of troops maneuvering through Slavonski-Brod has been called "the surge," a result of 2nd switching out with 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division.

During this surge, Woods said, they will process about 9,000 soldiers.

"It could go as high as 13,000, depending on several factors," said Woods.

While commanding Camp Sava North, the small unit needed to utilize other units to complete their mission.

"We couldn't accomplish the security mission without Military Police assets. We don't have the organic capabilities ourselves. In this case we have the 529th MP Company," said Kalberg.

The 82nd took over the camp with approximately half the personnel of the previous command. Conducting the same mission with less people took some creative

management by the 82nd.

"It required us to sit down and take a look at the people we have in the unit, access their individual skills and capabilities and put people in the appropriate places," said Merrill. "We had to ask

"With the downsizing and restructuring of the force... the reserve component is going to be ever increasingly tasked with deployment"

— Col. Dennis C. Merrill

who would be best suited for the positions we had to fill."

And that, Kalberg says, is where the reserve unit's strength comes from.

"What is perhaps unique to the reserve

units is that you have folks with a variety of civilian skills and experiences," Kalberg said.

For example, Woods is the elected district attorney for Morrow County, Ore.

"He deals with governmental infrastructure and is accustomed to dealing with people in that context, so he was a natural person to place in that mayoral position," said Kalberg, who is himself a lawyer in Portland, Ore. "That's the depth and diversity that a reserve component operation will bring to a situation like this."

Merrill said that reserve units can expect more deployments like this.

"With the downsizing and restructuring of the force, budget issues, and the world environment where we're having more of these peacekeeping missions, I think the reserve component is going to be ever increasingly tasked with deployments," said Merrill.

Whether tasked or not, one thing is certain to the leaders of the 82nd RTOC: if called, they will be ready.



Pvt. Carri M. Cotter, Geneva, NY, a petroleum supply specialist for Company B, 62nd Engineer Battalion "tops off" a five-ton truck at Auto West, Camp Sava North.

Photo by Staff Sgt. Tim Erhardt